

THE CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A keyboard comprising:

5 a plurality of keys associated with alphanumeric characters including the letters A-Z and at least the numbers 1-9, said keys being split into a left side section and a right side section,

wherein the left side section is oriented at least partially above the right side section to define an upper section corresponding to the left side section and a lower section

10 corresponding to the right side section,

or the right side section is oriented at least partially above the left side section to define an upper section corresponding to the right side section and a lower section corresponding to the left side section.

15 2. The keyboard of claim 1, wherein all of the keys of the upper section are positioned above all of the keys of the lower section.

3. The keyboard of claim 1, wherein part of the upper section vertically overlaps part of the lower section.

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4. The keyboard of claim 1, wherein part of the upper section transversely overlaps part of the lower section.

5. The keyboard of claim 1, wherein the alphanumeric characters represent a
25 QWERTY-style key arrangement, the upper section includes keys associated with the alphabetic characters "QWERTASDFGZXCV", and the lower section includes keys associated with the alphabetic characters "YUIOPHJKLBNM".

6. The keyboard of claim 1, wherein the upper section comprises at least three
30 rows and five columns of keys, and the lower section comprises at least three rows and five columns of keys.

7. The keyboard of claim 6, wherein the five columns of the upper section align longitudinally with the five columns of the lower section.

5 8. The keyboard of claim 6, wherein the five columns of the upper section are offset longitudinally from the five columns of the lower section

9. The keyboard of claim 6, wherein the left side section of keys comprises a first row associated with characters "Q", "W", "E", "R", and "T", a second row associated
10 with characters "A", "S", "D", "F", and "G", and a third row associated with characters "Z", "X", "C", and "V"; and

the right side section comprises a first row associated with characters "Y", "U", "I", "O", and "P", a second row associated with characters "H", "J", "K", and "L", and a third row associated with characters "B", "N", and "M".

15 10. The keyboard of claim 9, wherein the left side section of keys is associated with numbers 1-9, with the "1", "2", and "3" being associated with the first row, the "4", "5", and "6" being associated with the second row, and the "7", "8", and "9" being associated with the third row.

20 11. The keyboard of claim 10, further comprising a key associated with the space function and a key associated with the number "0".

25 12. The keyboard of claim 11, wherein the space function and the number "0" are associated with the same key.

30 13. The keyboard of claim 9, wherein the right side section of keys is associated with numbers 1-9, with the "1", "2", and "3" being associated with the first row, the "4", "5", and "6" being associated with the second row, and the "7", "8", and "9" being associated with the third row.

14. The keyboard of claim 13, further comprising a key associated with the space function and a key associated with the number "0".

15. The keyboard of claim 9, wherein the number "0" is associated with a key in
5 one of the left side section or the right side section.

16. The keyboard of claim 1, wherein at least some of the plurality of keys are further associated with at least one of symbols or functions.

10 17. The keyboard of claim 1, further comprising a thumb wheel coupled to the keyboard.

18. The keyboard of claim 1, further comprising a key associated with a "send" function, a key associated with an "end" function, and at least one key associated with a
15 "shift" function.

19. The keyboard of claim 1, further comprising at least one key associated with the caps function.

20 20. The keyboard of claim 19, wherein the at least one key associated with the caps function comprises a first caps key and a second caps key, with the first caps key being associated with the upper section and the second caps key being associated with the lower section.

21. A mobile communication device comprising:

a housing having a face; and

a keyboard associated with the face of the housing, wherein the keyboard includes a plurality of keys associated with both alphabetic and numeric characters arranged in a standard alphabetic format selected from a group consisting of QWERTY, QWERTZ, AZERTY, and DVORAK, and the keyboard is split into a left side section and a right side section, with one of the left or right side sections being disposed at least partially above the other section on the face of the housing.

22. A mobile communication device comprising:

a housing having a face; and

the keyboard of claim 1 associated with the face of the housing.

23. A mobile communication device comprising:

a housing having a face; and

the keyboard of claim 9 associated with the face of the housing.

24. A method for inputting alphanumeric characters into a mobile communication device, comprising:

holding a mobile communication device according to claim 21 with two hands such that the thumbs of the hands align with keys on the keyboard;

utilizing a thumb of one hand to enter key strokes on the left side section of the keyboard; and

utilizing a thumb of the other hand to enter key strokes on the right side section of the keyboard, wherein one of the thumbs is positioned above the other thumb on the face of the housing.

25. A method for inputting alphanumeric characters into a mobile communication device, comprising:

holding a mobile communication device according to claim 22 with two hands such that the thumbs of the hands align with keys on the keyboard;

5 utilizing a thumb of one hand to enter key strokes on the left side section of the keyboard; and

utilizing a thumb of the other hand to enter key strokes on the right side section of the keyboard, wherein one of the thumbs is positioned above the other thumb on the face of the housing.

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26. A method for inputting alphanumeric characters into a mobile communication device, comprising:

holding a mobile communication device according to claim 23 with two hands such that the thumbs of the hands align with keys on the keyboard;

15 utilizing a thumb of one hand to enter key strokes on the left side section of the keyboard; and

utilizing a thumb of the other hand to enter key strokes on the right side section of the keyboard, wherein one of the thumbs is positioned above the other thumb on the face of the housing.

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